

THE NEW YORK TIMES  
31 May 1976

# Press betrayed. Purge due. Please tell George Bush. And publisher.

By Edward P. Morgan

WASHINGTON—What bothers me is the calm after the storm. The press has been had by the Central Intelligence Agency. That shocking fact rolled like thunder through the report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities. Yet where is the loud collective outrage from what I like to consider the honorable trade of journalism, the only one I have ever plied?

Can we minions of the news media be so busy righteously defending freedom of the press under the First Amendment that we have no time to discover (or admit) that we have been subverted?

In highlighting the committee report released by chairman Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, The New York Times noted that "as of last February, some 50 American journalists or employees of domestic news-gathering organizations maintained covert links to the C.I.A. Even under new restrictive guidelines, half of these relationships will be continued."

How free is a press riddled with spies and informers? How can you argue that such a porous head of journalistic cheese is entitled to protection under the First Amendment? How do you publish or air what the public has a right to know if you don't know yourself whether it is tainted with distortion and/or lies? The insidiousness of the situation has just been intensified by totally unsubstantiated allegations of a Soviet weekly that the Moscow correspondents of The New York Times, Newsweek and The Associated Press are working for the C.I.A. The agency has uncorked an acid that eats at the integrity of American journalists as a whole.

That's only part of the problem. Defying a Presidential order, the agency continues "covert ties" with hundreds of academic scholars. In 1967, the Church report says, the C.I.A. "published or subsidized well over 200 books." In 1969, the total reached 250. The agency supports a press institute with a galaxy of reporters, and a foreign-based publishing institute.

Against all this, George Orwell's Big Brother would be too ashamed to hang his own brainwashing out on the line. Moscow editors who reputedly work day and night revising the Soviet Encyclopedia to conform with the changing Kremlin view of history must be

green with envy. For all I know, the C.I.A. may be covertly readying even now a Soviet Encyclopedia—a counterfeit of a counterfeit of history.

It is easy but risky to jest on this subject. Even if the new Senate Intelligence Committee maintains a tough and skeptical overview and a tight leash on the C.I.A. budget (an iffy prospect), how can we be sure how or whether the agency actually removes its honeycomb of activities from the catacombs of official secrecy, where the skeletons of power abuse still twitch?

When I was director of CBS News, briefly, I heard our Cairo stringer worked for the C.I.A. He was home on

leave. I asked him. He denied it firmly and, I thought, convincingly. But how could I really know? He resumed his Cairo post. What should I have done? How refreshing to note that it takes suspicion and insidiousness to defend an open society.

Should the media have no contact with the intelligence community? Absurd! During the Cuban missile crisis, John Scali, then my ABC colleague, was a vital conduit of information between the White House and the Soviet Embassy, when official communications between Moscow and Washington sputtered so unreliably. Allen Dulles and other C.I.A. chiefs gave me

valuable briefings and contacts before some foreign trip. Other correspondents received similar treatment.

It's when the cloak-and-dagger are thrust upon an American journalist that I draw a line. We assume that the man from Pravda, Tass or Izvestia is doing double duty with espionage. It's a different ball game if some United States news agency bureau chief in Bangkok is working for George Bush. (I have no knowledge that one is.)

The C.I.A.'s penetration of the Fourth Estate has created a treacherous and intolerable situation. It could well undermine what respect and in-

tegrity the press has left with a skeptical public.

We simply cannot pretend to have a free press if we don't purge ourselves of this subversion. To fail to do so would earn us a red badge of cowardice. I believe the names of the correspondents, publications and agencies still working for the C.I.A. should be exposed.

In this sinister age of bugs and taps and other invasions of privacy, must I be my brother's beeper? Not if I can help it.

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